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ABSTRACT

The problems of boys in schools, especially in reading and writing, have been the focus of statistical data, but research rarely points out how literacy educators can combat those problems. This book shares what the authors learned in working with a diverse group of young men to understand how they use literacy and what conditions promote it. Through a variety of research methods and an extended series of interviews with 49 young men in middle and high school who differ in class, race, academic achievement, kind of school, and geography, the educator/researchers identified the factors that motivated these young men to become accomplished in the activities they most enjoyed--factors that marked their literate activities outside of school, but were largely absent from their literate lives in school. According to the book, the study questions the way reading and literature are typically taught and suggests alternatives to traditional instruction. Building their findings on their understanding of the powerful and engaging experiences boys had outside of school, the educator/researchers discuss why boys embrace or reject certain ways of being literate, how boys read and engage with different kinds of texts, and what qualities of texts appeal to boys. The book highlights the importance of choice, the boys' need to be shown how to read, the cost of traditional teaching of difficult canonical texts, and the crucial place of meaningful social activity. Appended are the major coding categories; reading log directions; and category systems for the protocol analysis and distribution of moves by story. (Contains a 188-item bibliography.) (NKA)

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